

## Emergency Department Visits

Use of the emergency department may be influenced by underlying health status, the severity of the current illness or injury, access to other sources of health care, and health insurance status.

■ In general, adolescents 10–19 years of age visit the emergency department less often than younger children, young adults 20–24 years, and the elderly 65 years and older. Adolescents visit the emergency department about as often as adults 25–64 years. Adolescents and young adults 20–24 are more likely than others to use the emergency department for reasons related to an injury.

■ In 1995–97 visits to emergency departments for injuries comprised about one-half of all visits for adolescents 10–19 years, with higher proportions for males than for females (63 percent compared with 41 percent). This is related to the higher visit rates among males for injuries associated with being struck or cut (see [figure 10](#)).

■ Injury-related emergency department visit rates among male adolescents were consistently higher than noninjury visit rates. In contrast, noninjury visit rates among female adolescents exceeded injury-related visit rates by ages 14–15 and the gap widened with age.

■ Emergency department visit rates for injury increased with age. The injury-related visit rates for adolescent females and males 18–19 years of age were 1.5 and 1.6 times the rates for their respective counterparts 10–11 years of age.

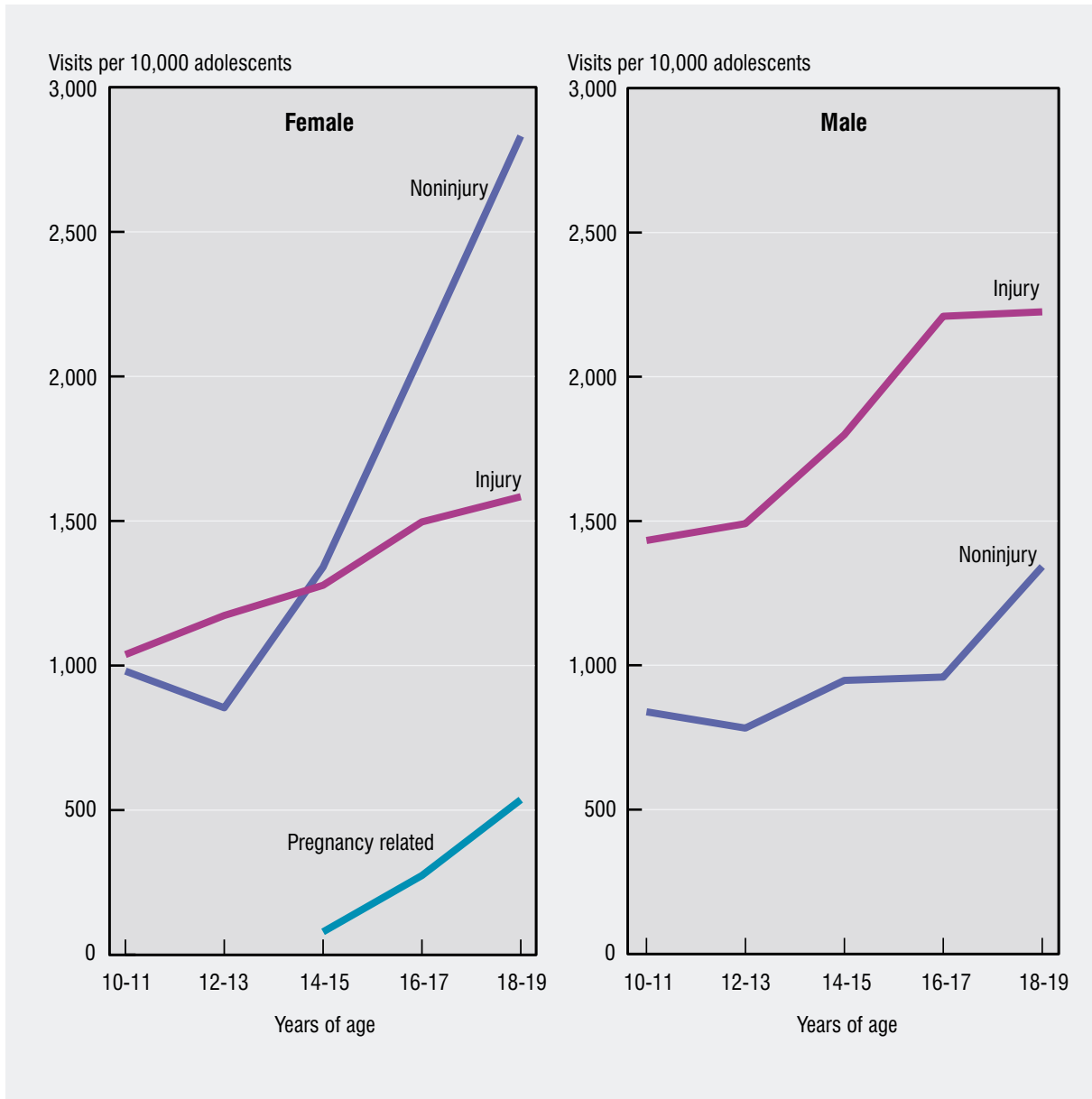
■ Emergency department visits for noninjury causes increased with age for both sexes. In 1995–97 the noninjury visit rate among males 18–19 years of age was 1.6 times that of those 10–11 years. In contrast, among female adolescents 18–19 years of age, the noninjury (and nonpregnancy-related) visit rate was triple that of adolescents 10–13 years of age.

■ Pregnancy-related emergency department visit rates increased almost sevenfold between ages 14 and

19 years (see figures 19 and 20). Pregnancy-related causes accounted for about 11 percent of all visits for female adolescents 18–19 years of age.

■ Emergency department visit rates increased with age for white and black adolescents. In 1995–97 age-specific emergency department visit rates for noninjury and nonpregnancy-related conditions for black adolescents were 1.6–2.0 times those for white adolescents. Similarly, pregnancy-related visit rates for black female adolescents 16–19 years were nearly 3 times the rates for white females. Visit rates for injuries were not significantly different for white and black adolescents.

Figure 9. Emergency department visit rates for injury, noninjury, and pregnancy-related diagnoses among adolescents 10–19 years of age, by age and sex: United States, average annual 1995–97



NOTES: See Technical Notes for discussion of emergency department visits. See also Appendix I, National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey. See Data Table for data points graphed.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS).